

## **New Richmond Initiates New Community-Driven City Planning Process**

The City of New Richmond is inviting all interested residents, business and commercial property owners, and community organizations, to participate in a new community-driven city planning process. This new engagement process will generate ideas, opportunities and recommendations for the new Community Action Plan (CAP), replacing the previous Comprehensive Planning (Comp Plan) engagement process.

“We initially began this process in February but quickly determined we wanted to step away from the traditional Comp Plan engagement process and find a new approach that establishes an actionable community plan which typical Comp Plans aren’t designed to do. This new Community Action Plan (CAP) process empowers our community take a direct role and ownership of our City’s future. This new approach allows our community to develop their own ideas to make our City an even better place to live, work and play,” comments Mike Darrow, City Administrator.

The City is planning an upcoming Community Kickoff event inviting all interested persons to attend and learn how their interests and talents will lead the planning of New Richmond through subcommittees matching the interests of the community with the needs of the City.

The goal of the new process is to establish community relationships that take ownership of the resulting CAP recommendations and projects. It is through these expanding relationships and resources that the CAP becomes a strategic ‘action plan’ turning committee ideas into reality.

The first phase of the new planning approach encourages committee members to identify community issues and research successful solutions and new opportunities. Resulting research will be transformed into recommendations for incorporation into the final CAP document. This phase of the CAP project will guide the City council, staff, and community interests for the next 10 years. This first phase of the new process is estimated to take approximately six months.

In the second phase, CAP recommendations will be converted into community projects, allowing residents, businesses and community organizations to participate in supporting any project that matches their interests. The outcome of the new CAP process provides ongoing projects the City and community can work on together to bring to fruition.

“We wanted our citizens and businesses to develop their own ideas and solutions we can all collaborate on through to implementation. The old Comp Plan engagement methods didn’t engage our community interests and resources to create actionable outcomes like this new approach,” comments Beth Thompson, Community Development Director.

The City has hired community engagement expert, Todd Streeter, principal, Community Collaboration, to assist in the City’s planning efforts. Streeter, a former mayor of the City of Lake St. Croix Beach, Chamber of Commerce executive and community foundation co-founder,

has used his unique community engagement process to help Cambridge revitalize their downtown and prepare Stillwater for emerging changes expected with the completion of the St. Croix River Crossing bridge this fall.

“I was impressed by the City’s sincere desire to have the community play a direct and ongoing role in defining New Richmond’s future. We are very excited to see the ideas, recommendations and projects residents and businesses create for New Richmond,” adds Streeter.

Additional information and committee participation opportunities will be announced soon. Interested participants are encouraged to contact Beth Thompson, at 715-246-4268 or by email at [bthompson@newrichmondwi.gov](mailto:bthompson@newrichmondwi.gov).

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